

# Towards a unified account of the suffix *-ez/jez* in Udmurt

Orsolya Tánczos  
RIL-HAS  
orsolyatan@gmail.com

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## **Aims**

- to propose a unified account of the Udmurt suffix *-ez/jez*
- to present a possible grammaticalization path from possessive uses to non-possessive uses of the suffix

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## Roadmap

1. Introduction
2. The origin of the suffix
3. Functions of the suffix in today's language
4. Analogues from other Uralic languages
5. Account
6. Grammaticalization path

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## **Introduction**

- Uralic language, Permic branch
- Minority language, Russian Federation, Udmurt Republic
- 552 299 total ethnic population, 339 800 native speakers (2010 census)
- Language contact, bilingualism

## Introduction

The suffix *-ez/jez* has long been analysed as both:

- Accusative case (e.g. Csúcs 1980, Kel'makov – Hännikäinen 1999, Kontratjeva 2002, 2010, Kozmács 2007)
  - 3SG Possessive Marker (e.g. Nikolaeva 2003, Edygarova 2009, 2010, Assmann et al 2013)
- Strong connection between the two main functions -  
Unified analysis is still missing

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## Origin of the suffix

- The *-ez/jez* (reconstructed form *\*-es/is*), the 3rd person singular possessive suffix, is assumed to have developed out of a personal pronoun already in Proto-Uralic (e.g. Janhunen 1981).
- The definiteness marking function is assumed to have existed already in Proto-Uralic.
- As a marker of accusative case, it appeared during the Proto-Permic period because the original Uralic accusative suffix *\*-m* disappeared (Csúcs 2005).
- Wichmann (1923-24) attributes this possessive-accusative shift to the determinative function of the possessive suffix.



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## Uses of the suffix *-ez/jez*



Possessive

Non-possessive

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### Marking Possessive relation

Singular 3rd Person Possessive suffix

- (1)      *Sasha-len*          *kniga-jez*  
          Sasha-gen          book-3sg  
          ‘book of Sasha’

Edygarova (2010): Possessive in Udmurt has two functions:

- Possessive use: marking possessive relation between the possessum and the possessor (1)
- Functional use: marking agreement between a constituent and its referent

In possessive function the appearance of the 3sgPX is obligatory

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### **Non-possessive functions: Marking subjects**

The suffix (optionally) occurs on the subject of an intransitive sentence

(2) a. *guzhdor vylyn turyn-ez cheber*

meadow on grass-DEF beautiful

‘On the meadow, the grass is beautiful.’ (Winkler 2001:32)

b. *kar-in kalik (-ez) tros*

city-INE people(-3SG) many

‘There are many people in the city.’ (Edygarova 2015:16)

The appearance of the suffix in type of (2a) is well-known from the literature as marking definiteness in the lack of definite article (e.g. Collinder 1960, Schlachter 1960, Kramsky 1972, Rédei 1988, Leinonen 1998, Künnap 2004, Winkler 2001, 2011)

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### **Non-possessive functions: Marking objects**

Udmurt is a DOM language. The object is always marked if definite and specific (i.e. topic) (3a) and never marked if non-specific (3b)

(3) a. *Mon (so(ze)) \*kniga/kniga-jez utchaj oty.*  
1SG that.ACC book.(ACC)/book-ACC search.PST.1SG there  
'I searched for the book there.'

b. *Mon kniga/\*kniga-jez utchas'ko gubios s'arys'.*  
1SG book.(ACC)/ book-ACC search.PST.1SG mushroom.PL about  
'I am searching for a book about mushrooms.'

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## Non-possessive functions: Marking the Causee argument

The suffix obligatory appears both with synthetic (4a) and analytic (4b) causative constructions marking the Causee argument of the predicate.

(4) a. *Sasha pi-jez kniga-jez lydzhy-t-iz.*

Sasha.NOM boy-ACC book-ACC read-CAUS-PST.3SG

‘Sasha made the/a boy read the book.’

b. (...) *so peres' kyshno so nyl-ez min'ts'o estyny kosem (...)*

that old woman that girl-ACC sauna to.heat ordered

‘The old woman ordered the girl to heat a sauna.’ (Wichmann 1901:text 7)



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## **Non-possessive functions: Nominalizer**

As a nominalizer the suffix can appear on any kind of category

(7) *ton ponna-jez*

2sg because.of-NOMIN

‘who because of you’

(Winkler 2001:13)



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## **Analogues from two other Uralic languages**

Px in non-possessive functions in Uralic is well-known from the literature (e.g. Fraurud 2001, Nikolaeva 2003, Simonenko 2014)

Similar functions of the 3rd possessive in other Uralic languages:

- Northern Mansi (Janda 2015)
- Hungarian (É. Kiss 2016)

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### **Northern Mansi (Janda 2015)**

- Semantic analysis based on Langacker's (1993) reference-point model
- Original function of possessive suffixes: to denote a relation between two entities
- The main property of possessive suffixes is to establish reference (possessor is the reference point)
- Possessive relation is the default interpretation

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**Northern Mansi (Janda 2015)**

Reference can be either anaphoric (8a) or deictic (8b)

(8) a. *a:sj-anəl*      *la:w-i*  
father-sg<3pl    say-prs.3sg  
'Their father said.'      (Janda 2015:7c)

b. *mir-um*      *pussən*    *amki*      *ka:t-um*      *wos*    *pat-i*  
people-sg<1sg    all      1sgemph    hand-sg<1sg    HORT start-prs.3sg  
'All my people shall be in my hands.'      (Janda 2015:6)

These properties have a strong connection to the information structure.

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**Hungarian analogue: *-ik* and *-ja* (É. Kiss 2016)**

*-ik*: 3PL possessive suffix

The suffix *-ik* appearing on pronouns, (9a) on ordinal numerals (9b) and, optionally, on comparative adjectives (9c):

- (9) a. *minden-ik* ‘every’  
b. *második* ‘2nd’  
c. *szebb-ik* ‘more beautiful’

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**Hungarian analogue: *-ik* and *-ja* (É. Kiss 2016)**

*-jA*: 3SG possessive suffix

The suffix can mark familiarity.

(10) *Hármas-á-val mentünk be.*

three-Poss3SG-with went-1PL in

‘We went in in threes.’

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## Semantic background

- Proposal: the main function of the suffix *-ez/jez* is to mark a relation between two entities.
- The use of the suffix is based on the cognitive notion of ‘**associability**’ which entails functions such as marking definiteness, referentiality and identifiability (Fraurud 2001).



## Semantic background

Simonenko (2014):

- possessive suffixes encode different reference-related categories
- the role of possessive suffixes in possessive use is to pick an individual out of a set of individuals with the relevant property belonging to some person
- Possessive and non-possessive uses can have exactly the same semantics
- The salience ranking relevant for the semantics of possessive suffixes is partially derived from the hierarchy of “possessors”
- 3SG is used in both possessive and non-possessive contexts

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### Syntactic analysis: Back to Hungarian

In OH texts, *-ik*-marked elements only appear as heads of possessive constructions with a lexical or pro possessor (11)

- (11) *Valanac ot hat ko, vedreci [DP pro<sub>i</sub> mēdèn-ici] foglaluā kèt koblōt.*  
were there six stone buckets every-Poss3PL taking two vats  
'There were six buckets of stone and all of them were two vats.'

In Middle Hungarian, *-ik* is reinterpreted as a familiarity marker; and the *-ik*-marked element becomes a determiner/modifier. However, its possessor is still implicitly present, excluding a generic reading:

- (12) a. *Minden-ik ember magas.*                      b. *Minden-\*ik ember halandó.*  
every man [of them] tall                              every man mortal

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### **Syntactic analysis: Implicit possessor in Udmurt**

Implicit possessor appears in *-ez/jez* constructions (e.g. 13)

- (13) *kar-in kalik (-ez) tros*  
city-INE people(-3SG) many  
'There are many people in the city.' (Edygarova 2015:16)

The possessor can be explicit:

- (14) *kar-len kalyk -ez tros.*  
city- GEN people-3SG many  
'The city has many people.'

The function of this suffix is to mark the associability (familiarity) in this context.

## Implicit possessor in contrastives

Associability (Familiarity) marking is present in contrastive contexts.

Implicit possessors represent opposing subsets of a familiar referent

(15)(...) *pokchi-ez*      *brat*      *kuaner*, *byzym-ez*      *brat*      *uzyr*

younger-3SG    brother    poor      older-3SG    brother    rich

‘(...), the younger brother was poor, the older brother was rich’

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### Implicit possessor: anti-agreement

The partitive and counting meanings of *tros* 'many' are also distinguished by *-ez/jez*:

- (16) a. *tros-ez mynozy, kinlen van' in'i vizajez jake kin oty,*  
many-3SG go.FUT.3PL who.GEN be already visa.3SG or who there  
*Jevropayn ule.*  
Europe.in live  
'Many [of them] will go, who has already visa or who live there, in Europe.'  
(Internet: Facebook)

- b. *Tros adjamy lyktiz koncerte.*  
many people came concert.to  
'Many people came to the concert.'

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## **Grammaticalization path**

Grammaticalization of the possessive suffixes from possessive use to non-possessive use in Uralic (e.g. Gerland 2011, Relational Suffix)

vs.

The ‘non-possessive functions’ of the Udmurt *-ez/jez* represent different stages of a similar grammaticalization path.

*-ez/jez* is a 3SG possessive agreement which can also be used in the presence of an implicit possessor present in the situation or the context – the associability marking

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### **Grammaticalization path**

Possessive agreement with explicit possessor →  
possessive agreement with implicit possessor →  
marking associability (anti-agreement) →  
marking familiarity-topic → topic-marker →  
accusative case



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## Grammaticalization path: relics

As a relic of its original possessive agreement role, *-ez/jez* can only merge with the category NP, hence its lexical stem is assigned an NP layer, and is interpreted as a nominal:

(8) *ton ponna-jez*

you because.of-NOMIN

‘who/which is because of you’

Similarly to Hungarian suffix *-ik* (É. Kiss 2016)

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In addition to standard Udmurt case inventory, Beserman Udmurt has the recessive case and a series of personal-local cases (Usacheva and Arkhangelskiy 2017); see Appendix 1 for a comparison of Standard Udmurt and Beserman case systems. The Beserman grammar was partly described by Tepljaĭina (1970) and Ljukina (2008). Out of the seven kinds of compounding described in Noonan (2008), we attested the following in Beserman or literary Udmurt: a. Simple headless adnominal: a noun marked with an adnominal case is further assigned a case intended for the elided head. This kind is by far the most frequent kind of case compounding and is illustrated in (2a). Udmurt -general information Uralic > Finno-Ugric > Permic (closest relatives: Komi-Permyak and Komi-Zyryan) geographic distribution: Republic of Udmurtia, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Perm Krai 325,000 speakers (in an ethnic population of 550,000) minority language in the Russian Federation; official status in the Republic of Udmurtia

Converbs as inflectional suffixes? According to Haspelmath (1995), converbs are non-finite verb forms, in other words, converb morphemes are verbal suffixes. Diachronically, converbs tend to originate. Hence, it is controversial whether converbs in Udmurt form a class morphologically. Suggestion: Classification based on distribution? Adjunct clauses do share some syntactic properties (including postpositional forms of nominalizations). From possessor agreement to object marking in the evolution of the Udmurt -jez suffix: a grammaticalization approach to morpheme syncretism. Katalin Á. Kiss, Orsolya tánczos. The suffix -yz, believed to be an archaic variant, appears on certain members of the basic vocabulary, for example, those denoting family relations and body parts (Saĭa-len ki-yz ~Sasha's hand), after the plural marker (Saĭa-len agaj-os-yz ~Sasha's brothers), and after the instrumental, relative, translative, and egressive case endings (e.g. Saĭa-len. The descriptive grammars of these languages take notice of the definiteness-marking role of possessive agreement, but accounts going beyond observations are scarce. From possessor agreement to object marking: the grammaticalization path of the Udmurt -(j)ez suffix. Katalin Á. Kiss (Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) & Orsolya Tanczos (Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). The phonologically null *pro* could be ignored, and -jez could be reanalyzed as a general partitivity suffix, signalling that the referent of the noun phrase is part of a referent present in the domain of discourse. When the empty nominal head was also ignored, -jez came to be reanalyzed as a partitive-contrastive suffix of adjectives and quantifiers. I.e.: (2)i. [DP *pro* [NP pokchi Ā-jezi]] Ā ii. [NP pokchi Ā-jez] Ā iii. [AP pokchi-jez].